

The Addison Act

Building on the legacy, a century of council housing

"I think there is no dispute in any quarter that this matter is of the utmost importance, from the point of view not only of the physical well-being of our people, but of our social stability and industrial content..."

Dr. Christopher Addison, Minister of Health, 7th April 1919

1919

It is 100 years since the Housing, Town Planning Act, widely referred to as the Addison Act, received Royal Assent. It was the first time that councils had been given a duty to consider the need for council housing and marked the beginning of building council housing at scale.

The First World War had put many social problems and their close connection with dire housing conditions into stark relief. Poor quality housing, slums, over-crowding and lack of sanitation were blamed for a high infant mortality rate and the general poor health of the population. The survivors came home to a severe shortage of housing suitable for a modern industrial workforce. The Addison Act sought to solve these social problems.

"We can never get at the root of our difficulties until we are able to give the people a home which will be something worth having" – debate speaker, April 1919

The passing of the Addison Act and the advent of widescale council housing revolutionised living conditions for millions of British people in the twentieth century. They finally had high quality, affordable homes, built to excellent design standards in communities where people were – and are still – proud to live.



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2019

Today, the NFA and ARCH represent nearly 100 councils and ALMOs across England, providing homes and housing-related services to over a million households.

Council housing is the linchpin of communities, giving people the secure, affordable homes they need to reach their potential. As geographically concentrated organisations, our members are instrumental in their contribution to a range of cross-cutting policy priorities, including employment and education, tackling homelessness, crime and ASB; and improving health, financial wellbeing and community resilience.

NFA and ARCH members have continued to build new high-quality homes that meet the needs of communities. Our members have expertise in many areas, including large scale developments, regeneration projects and small, challenging in-fill sites; development across a range of tenures; specialist and general needs housing; modern methods of construction and carbon neutral design. They are also responding to the challenges in the construction sector by working to build employment pathways in construction for local people.

Following the very welcome decision of the Government to lift the HRA borrowing cap, ARCH and NFA member councils and their ALMOs are keen to play their part in delivering the Government's promise of "a new generation of council housing" by building "not just homes that people have to live in, but homes they want to live in, homes they can be proud to live in".



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Nottingham

Nottingham City Homes and Nottingham City Council are marking the Addison Act with a large programme of community events which celebrate the role that council housing plays within the city. There are around 27,000 council homes in the city of Nottingham managed by the council's ALMO, Nottingham City Homes. The council has 647 homes built or under construction as part of Building a Better Nottingham, and let their 500th new home in November 2018.

All Nottingham City Homes new build properties are built to The Code of Sustainable Homes Level 4 standards to ensure high levels of energy efficiency, lower carbon emissions and warm, secure homes that cost less to run. Building a Better Nottingham includes a number of developments across the city that are being built on unused garage sites that formerly attracted anti-social behaviour. Some of these new homes are being built by members of Nottingham City Homes' own in-house teams, ensuring both experienced tradespeople and apprentices have the chance to work on these homes. All craftspeople working on these sites are local to Nottingham, and all apprentices come from within the city boundary, with almost 100% of materials sourced on-site from local suppliers, supporting local businesses and driving the local economy.



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Stoke-on-Trent City Council

This Council is developing ambitious plans to invest in council housing following the lifting of the HRA borrowing cap. The additional borrowing will be used to facilitate the development and acquisition of new council homes for social and affordable rent through the HRA. It will enable a significantly enhanced and accelerated programme of delivery, with planned provision over the next six years increasing from the 370 new homes included in the current HRA business plan to around 1,370. This level of delivery will help to replace homes lost to the Housing Revenue Account through Right to Buy, with over 1,000 homes having been sold since 2012.

Importantly, planned investment in the HRA sits within a wider programme of planned housing investment. This includes the development of homes for private rent and sale through Fortior Homes. The council is also working with private sector organisations to bring forward new initiatives aimed at facilitating home ownership, including through models such as rent to buy and equity loans linked to bringing empty homes back into use.

Luton Borough Council

Luton is planning to use the new borrowing freedoms for land acquisition and the development of affordable homes. Their strategic targets include delivery of 3,500 homes, of which 700 are affordable homes, by 2022.

Luton is one of the few councils in the country that has its own in-house building team. They have particular expertise in developing smaller in-fill sites on existing estates and this team will be used to build HRA funded homes on smaller sites in the town.

To date the council is proud to be able to conclude two of their larger HRA developments in Marsh Farm costing £32 million, comprising 11 houses (ready for let in Sept 19) and 83 flats (ready for let in February 2020) and Roman Way costing £4 million for 20 units including 3 bungalows also nearing completion by this summer July 2019.

LB of Barnet

Barnet Homes was created in 2004 as a traditional Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) with a ten-year management agreement to provide housing related services for Barnet Council. A new ten-year management agreement was signed in April 2016, enabling Barnet Homes to work with the Council to achieve its ambitious plans for growth.

Barnet Homes recently developed a state-of-the-art extra care scheme, Ansell Court, in Mill Hill on behalf of Barnet Council, to address the housing needs of the growing older population in the borough. The scheme is 53 units, is dementia-friendly and boasts a hairdressing salon, commercial kitchen and coffee shop facility that will be open to the local community thus encouraging that all-important intergenerational interaction. There are also plans to develop a further 125 extra-care homes in Barnet for the council.

In March 2017, the Group received approval from the Social Housing Regulator to launch a Registered Provider, Opendoor Homes which is a subsidiary of Barnet Homes. Over the next 5 – 10 years we have plans to build 800 additional homes either through Opendoor Homes or directly for the Council. There are approximately 280 homes for affordable rent on site. 400 homes due on site over the next 18 months including some mixed-tenure homes. In addition to this, there are another 350 homes in various planning stages.

Barnet Homes is working with people local to the Watling Estate to create a book of memories to celebrate 100 years of the Addison Act. The Watling Estate was one of the original housing estates to be built following the Addison Act of 1919.



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